

# Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

MARCH 1986

## EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting March 7: Annual General Meeting - Members' Night.

Meeting April 4: 'Koalas' - Roger Martin.

Excursion March 8: Anglesea - Mary White.

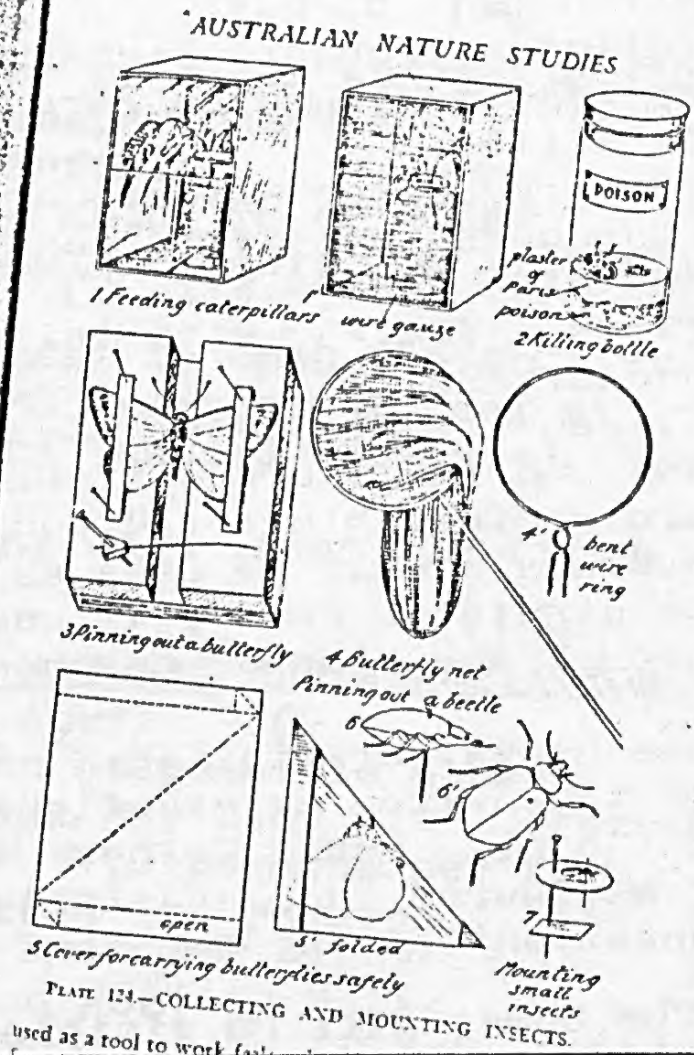
Excursion April 11 - 13: Comet Campout, Grampians.

**STUDIES**  
wings have a fringe of hairs, hence the name, fringe-winged for the order. Many kinds have been spread widely on garden plants. A small common introduced form, about  $\frac{1}{16}$  inch long, does much harm to gardens, and also native plants. The peculiar suctorial mouth is complicated. The larvæ resemble the parents, though the pupa is sometimes a resting form. Some live on plant juices, some on pollen. The giant of the family is an Australian thrip about half an inch long. Some Australian forms live in remarkable galls on native plants, and survive long-continued droughts.

**BREEDING, COLLECTING AND PRESERVING INSECTS.**

Many will desire to study the life-history of at least some insects. It is convenient to keep these close at hand, but the conditions must be as near natural conditions as possible. A few may desire to form a collection of insects, though nature-study is concerned mainly with the living, active animal, and but little with the dead. The best specimens of butterflies and moths are those bred from caterpillars.

A chalk-box makes a convenient breeding-box. Two disused quarter-plate negatives washed off form a perfectly-fitting lid; the bottom is replaced by fine gauze. The caterpillars are kept on a branch of the food-plant standing in a bottle of water, and replaced when necessary. Some arvæ pupating in the ground require an inch of soil in the bottom of the box. A piece of wood containing wood-eating larvæ can be kept in a glass jar covered with gauze. When collected in the field, beetles are placed in methy-aster of Paris covers the deadly poison beneath. When ad, the insects should be pinned out on a pinning-board (24:3), made with two strips of linoleum or cork, with ice for the body of a moth between. Wings, feelers, and s should be held in position by strips of paper and fine omological pins (No. 5), which do not rust. The pin uld pass through the centre of the chest of a butterfly through the right wing.



President: Miss H Burgess 312210  
Secretary: Miss J Binns 323670  
Treasurer: Mrs F Williamson 327631  
Editors: Mr G Binns 323670  
Mr I Fink 052 861310

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Art Building of the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 7.30pm.

EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS, BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS.

## EXCURSION - MARCH 8, ANGLESEA.

Our annual coastal excursion has been arranged for Saturday March 8, and will be led by Mary White. Depart Civic Hall Car Park (rear of Hall) at 9.30 AM, or meet at 4 Macmillan St, Anglesea at 11.00 AM. Bring requirements for a day at the coast, studying between tide marks and the coastal flora.

## THE COMET "CAMP-OUT" - APRIL 12 - 13.

A Club Campout weekend has been scheduled to coincide with the best time for viewing Halley's Comet viz. the second week of April. The Grampians will be the venue, with elevated viewing sites by night and plenty to observe in the environment by day!

Preliminary negotiations have been made with Halls Gap Lakeside Caravan Park which has the following facilities:

- \* Powered Sites - tents or vans - two persons \$6; Unpowered \$5; \$1.50 each additional person.
- \* On Site Vans - \$17, \$3.
- \* Flats - \$22, \$3; with toilet \$23; with toilet and shower \$25.

All require blankets, linen, pillows.

Vans and flats are suitable for family of 6, but more comfortable for 4 adults.

Bookings should be made as soon as possible for the nights of Friday 11 and Saturday 12 April, through the Club or on phone: 56 4281.

Some hints for viewing. The following extracts are taken from an excellent publication produced by the H.V. McKay Melbourne Planetarium, Museum of Melbourne, and available locally from the Education Centre, Hopetoun Street.

The Comet will be visible to the naked eye in March and April, however the Comet will not be in the sky the whole night except a few dates in April. The Comet is at its closest approach 11th April.

Some hints when making astronomical observations:-  
Let your eyes become adapted to darkness.  
Dress warmly, the nights may be cold and you will be inactive while observing.  
A pair of 7X50 binoculars will be an asset, even better mounted on a tripod.

A further bonus will happen on April 24th at about 11 PM. Eastern Time, the full Moon will move into the Earth's Shadow and there will be a total eclipse of the Moon.

This eclipse will be interesting in its own right, but in addition it will also allow Halley's Comet to be seen once again.

It should be possible to Photograph the comet with an ordinary 35 MM. camera, with a lens of 50 MM. focal length or longer, and having a B setting for time. A cable release is advisable.

To photograph the comet, preferably under dark skies in the countryside.

- 1 Use a high speed color or black and white film. 400 ASA, film for transparencies is preferable.
- 2 Set Camera focus to infinity.
- 3 Set Camera aperture to about F4 or wider.
- 4 Put the Camera on something solid. A tripod is preferable.
- 5 Press the Camera release to open the shutter.
- 6 Expose the film for 30 seconds, (longer will result in star streaks instead of stars).
- 7 Release the shutter.
- 8 Warn the developers of what is on the films.

WESTERN VICTORIAN FIELD NATURALISTS ASSOCIATION  
Autumn Campout 25/26/27 April 1986.

BOOKINGS required as soon as possible please.

Campout based at 'Portland Bay Camp Site' (foreshore)

Bunk style accommodation 10 persons per room,  
pillows, linen and blankets are required,

Accommodation: \$4 per head per night.

Shower block, Toilets and Meeting Hall.

Well equipped Kitchen facilities (D.Y.O. cooking)

Please indicate how many seats you would require if excursion buses are arranged.

Further details are available from Joanne.



# AT NEWLYN

"Boating: Bathing: Camping: " "PROHIBITED"

so we didn't!

Eating blackberries and other things,  
Spotting and identifying birds, their tracks and nests,  
Identifying trees, examining leaves and seed pods,  
Identifying plants - land and water,  
Spotting insects and their eco systems,  
Identifying crustaceans and their habitat,  
Inspecting a decomposing fish (unidentified),  
Drinking tea and plum juice, laughing, sharing  
knowledge and discoveries under a warm blue sky.

WE DID!

The excursion capably led by Gretl was to Newlyn Reservoir, which supplies water to Newlyn and the potato growers.

Thirty enthusiasts, ranging in age from 2 months to 70 years next birthday, one 16 year old birthday celebrant, met together under the Reservoir pine trees.

Naturally, as in all the best excursions, we began with a cuppa, then set off at a leisurely pace walking over river gravel, amidst reeds and sedges (Talk in May on "Reeds and Sedges"), clambering over logs, placing feet carefully along the water's edge.

We listened to each other, to the birds and insects and to the gentle lapping water in the southerly breeze.

A list of living things seen is as follows: :

## BIRDS..

Brown hawk	Black duck	Wattle birds	Galah
Crested Grebe	Silver gull	Crimson rosellas	Wrens
Cormorant	Yellow Rump	Thornbill ..	being fed.
Pelicans	Coots ..	white beak	Black Swan
Sacred Ibis	Masked lapwing	Swifts	Plovers
Little falcon	Gold finches	White faced heron	
Magpie mudlarks.			

ALSO Lots of different feathers on the ground.

SEEN Autumn moulting?

Tracks of ibis, gulls and mudlarks.

Magpie nest near top of large Candlebark tree.

## TREES

Many exotic trees in the Reserve looked sick.  
The willows and ash by the water were thriving.

Euc. Ovata	Blackwood	Excellent with <u>many signs of</u> regeneration.
( " Leucoxlyn)	Black wattle	
Candlebark	Silver wattle	

There were infestations of gorse, hawthorn, briar rose  
thistles, blackberries, sorrel, plantain

The Bidgee Widgees are thriving.

## INSECTS

Flies	Cabbage butterflies	Male adult has one spot.
Spiders		Female adult ..two spots on forewing.

In a small pond near the edge of the Reservoir, an  
observant, informed member enabled us to see caddis fly  
larvae propelling themselves, having inserted their  
bodies into stems of dead sticks, through the water.

## ANIMALS

A search for platypus was made; but no sighting reported.  
We did learn that the plural of "platypus" is platypus,  
in case we did see more than one.

Sheep                      Cattle                      Dogs

### THE BLACKWOOD TREE.

It was observed with delight, that the black shiny seeds  
of the Blackwood were encircled by an apricot aril and  
attached to the legume by springy thread.

The trees were covered with opened seedpods and the  
ground strewn with legumes, all adding to the rich  
texture of the ground cover.

Three fortunate members were able to see Ladies Tresses,  
Fairy Aprons and Onion Orchids.. by the dozens.

Sentences read from a <sup>Member's</sup> Butterfly Book over tea, read like  
poetry, "Dusted white", "Blotched black" "Chocolate brown!"  
It was only possible to compile these notes because of  
everyone's generous and expert contributions. Thankyou.  
We had a marvellous time.

Margaret Martin 9.2.86.



## MEETING 7 Feb 1986.

Helen Burgess, Pat Murphy, Gail Spicer and Harvey Hooper met one evening and decided that Harvey would give an outline of the way in which plants are "placed" into "families".

There are well over 100 families represented in the flora of Victoria. It was decided to use six of the families whose seeds are dicotyledons as examples.

Among the characteristics of plants used in their classification the structure of the flower is most important, but other features are also used.

Plants from the following six families were examined during the evening:-

Protocea (eg. Grevillea); Myrtaceae (Flowering Gum); Mimosaceae (Wild Radish); Pittosporaceae (Bursaria); Epacridaceae (Common Heath).

Plants belonging to these families vary in the following way:-

Whether there is a perianth, a whorl of sepals and petals and whether the petals are separate or fused, whether the ovary is inferior or superior, the number of styles, anthers and locules.

These terms were explained and, finally, the members present were given examples of each family so that they could use a simple "key" that had been prepared.

## FIELD OBSERVATIONS - February Meeting.

- Claire Dalman -  
Many Lorikeets in Wendouree house gardens.
- Margaret Rotheram -  
Pair of Brolgas at Beeac, late January.
- Jean Spicer -  
22 Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos in East Ballarat residential area.
- Greg Binns -  
Decrease in number of Waders in Apollo Bay area this Summer. Hooded Plovers were absent.  
-Attended Wader count with Geelong group, (Feb 2) at Salt Works, Moolap. Most numbers of - Banded Stilt ; Golden Plover; Marsh, Sharptailed and Curlew Sandpipers, L. Stint , Greenshank.

- Ken Hammond -  
Lake Goldsmith almost dry.
- Margaret Tonkin -  
Attended CAE excursion to Bogong High Plains -  
Alpine flora significantly more profuse in ungrazed areas.
- Lyndsay Fink -  
Black Fronted Plovers observed by dams near Meredith
- Margaret Dowling -  
Three Boobook Owl fledglings at Learmonth.
- Harvey Hooper -  
Seeds of Anchor Plant collected from Snizort and Lal Lal, for future germination.
- Helen Burgess -  
In Sydney observed White Headed Pigeon; Spine Tailed Swifts flying low. Noted abundance of Red Wattle Birds this Summer, and their dominance over other birds in gardens.

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### BOTANICAL NOTES - CONTINUED.

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#### FAMILY DROSERACEAE (sundew) - (see page 8)

There is only one genus, Drosera, and several spp. are very common around Ballarat.

The upper surface of the leaves are covered with glandular hairs which close over small insects (and other very small animals). These are then 'digested' and the contents absorbed.

The flowers are bisexual and regular. The ovary is superior, has one locule and there are two or more styles.

#### FAMILY TREMANDRACEAE

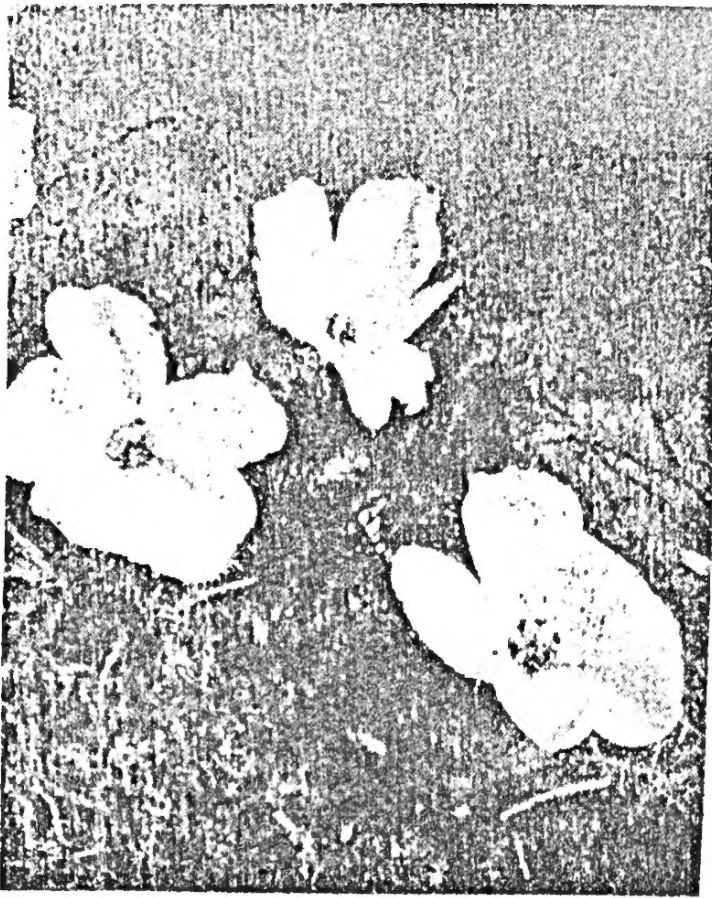
Also has one genus, Tetratheca (pink bells).

The ovary is superior. has two locules and there are one or two ovules in each locule. There is one simple style.

There are five to ten anthers and these open at the top of a tube.

Flowers are red and have four sepals and four petals.

H.H.



## SCENTED SUNDEW

*Drosera Whittakeri*

Fly-catcher is the popular name of the Scented Sundew, the largest flowered of a group of yellowish-green or dark bronze-red plants found in many parts of the world, and which reach the peak of their development in Australia. The greatest variety and number are in Western Australia. The common title *Drosera*—alludes to the glistening, sticky hairs that cover the leaves, and among which small insects are often entrapped and absorbed. Damp, open places that may be deficient in nitrogen and phosphorus are the sundews' habitat. That's why they supplement their diet by "eating" flies and other insects. In the scented sundew, the spoon-shaped leaves are arranged in a basal rosette up to 1½ in. across. This rosette lies close to the ground, and from it arise one or more white flowers of five broad-tipped petals. Five sepals are turned back below the flower when it is opened, but when the petals and stamens fall, the sepals close up around the ovary, which enlarges to form a dark colored capsule containing the seeds.

WILD LIFE, September, 1951